

Andrew Morrison [via email]

Planning, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

1 December 2021

**Objection to Planning Application: R/52/243
Thorns Farm, Marsett Lane, Countersett**

Hybrid planning application consisting of: Full planning permission for redevelopment of two farm buildings (A+B) to form gallery/studio space; construction of workshop/storage building (C) with staff accommodation above; construction of building (D) to provide 2 no. two-bedroom cottages for visitor accommodation; provision of parking area and: Outline planning permission for conversion of field barn 1 to artist studio accommodation; redevelopment of the Boat House to visitor accommodation; construction of dwelling on site of Thorns Farm (E); renovation/re-roofing of field barn 3 and provision of services to field barn 2 for agricultural use

Dear Mr Morrison

Friends of the Dales object to this application for the following reasons:

The aim of promoting a development that attracts those interested in art, crafts and the environment could be seen as a welcome approach that acknowledges the value of the Raydale landscape. However, this proposal is of an inappropriate scale, and brings with it a number of unacceptable impacts within a relatively remote and highly sensitive landscape.

The proposed buildings will be visible to visitors to Semerwater. The development itself will generate additional footfall in this sensitive area where access is mainly by car and have adverse impacts on an important SSSI. The overall development is not consistent with the nature and character of the area.

We consider some of the proposals particularly harmful:

Redevelopment of the Boat House to visitor accommodation

The ruined boat house lies within Semerwater SSSI. There are vulnerable wetland habitats at this shallow end of the lake including swamp, fen, marsh and willow carr. Constraints on activities on and around this end of the lake have been in existence for decades in order to protect the wildlife and the sensitive wetland habitats, so it is entirely inappropriate to encourage visitor access and allow unfettered access by visitors with children, dogs, canoes, etc. Indeed, it undermines the credibility of the applicant's claim to be proposing an environmentally sensitive development by even considering new build within an SSSI, especially within the low-lying flood prone wetland area.

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Conversion of field barn to artist studio accommodation

This barn is similarly in a ruinous state. The proposal is therefore not a barn conversion, and it does nothing to conserve the historic interest of the barn or its location within the middle of the field. New build here would not fall within the policy for barn conversion, which is a conservation policy, and if permitted would set a disturbing precedent.

Construction of new dwelling at Thorns Farm

This would be a new dwelling in open countryside, but there is no evident justification for a dwelling in that location. Should this be given permission, when farmers and land managers have to demonstrate need for a new dwelling, would set another disturbing precedent. This is considered over-development.

Construction of 2 no. two-bedroom cottages for holiday lets, and construction of workshop / storage building with staff accommodation above

Whilst the construction of a new barn, within the farm complex, could be acceptable, it contributes to the excessive and inappropriate development of the area. This is exacerbated by the proposed construction of two new cottages for holiday lets. We consider this to be an inappropriate level of development.

Provision of parking area

As the proposals do not give any figures of visitor numbers it is not possible to judge whether or not the proposed parking facilities are adequate or too generous. Although the proposal aims at "improving and better integrating into the landscape" the car parking deemed necessary, there cannot be any doubt that creating an additional tourist attraction of this scale in this location would be harmful, in particular by generating more traffic. This would be in conflict with the overall aims of the Local Plan to achieve sustainable development and reduce emissions.

To summarise

Friends of the Dales has grave concerns about the over-development of the site and the extent of new build, especially as it relates to the SSSI; we see no justification for these. **We object strongly** to the new structure on the site of the field barn, to the new build on top of the ruins of the boathouse, and to the construction of a new dwelling and holiday lets.

Yours sincerely



Wilf Fenten, Chair, Policy and Planning Committee

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